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Letter dated 12 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the presidential elections in Georgia issued on 6 January 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 12 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the presidential elections in Georgia issued on 6 January 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the preliminary findings and conclusions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to the presidential elections in Georgia on 4 January 2004. The findings state that the elections demonstrated notable progress over previous elections. The conduct of the elections has brought Georgia closer to meeting international standards for democratic elections.

The high rate of participation of the Georgian population in the election and the clear and broad mandate given to Mr. Saakashvili represent a very positive signal for the future of Georgia.

The presidential election has opened up new opportunities for Georgia. The European Union now looks forward to helping Georgia and the other countries of the South Caucasus to come closer to the European family. In this context, the European Union restates its willingness to assist Georgia through the range of European Union instruments and policies. It looks forward to Georgia having the benefit of close and cooperative relations with all its neighbours.

The European Union welcomes Mr. Saakashvili's first public comments following his victory on the need to combat corruption and to uphold the rule of law. Progress in this reform programme will facilitate increased international support and engagement in Georgia's development. The European Union calls upon all parties in Georgia to work with the President-elect on the much-needed reforms, and to conclude an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to allow for full and effective international financial assistance.

The European Union has also taken note of the remaining concerns and of the summary recommendations on the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Georgia, included as part of the IEOM statement, on issues such as equal conditions and equal media access for all parties and improvement of voter registration. Assistance to enable the preparation of free and fair elections in Georgia remains high on the European Union agenda. We expect the Georgian authorities to establish a realistic timetable so that the progress made in these presidential elections can be sustained and the specific recommendations can be addressed.

The European Union High Representative Javier Solana has requested the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, to visit Tbilisi shortly to assess how the European Union may best assist the new leadership.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia align themselves with this statement.